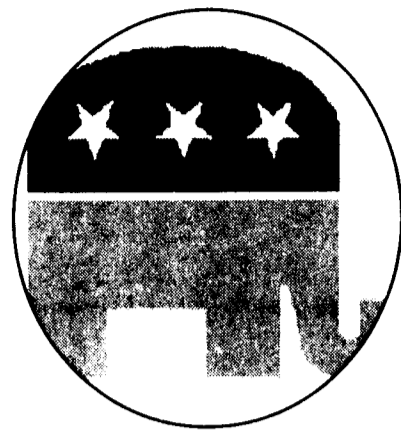


STUDENT LIFE

Primary Progress

Running mates may sway voters



• On Feb. 7, **Mitt Romney** announced that he would be withdrawing from the presidential race. This announcement came after a bad showing for Romney on Super Tuesday that saw John McCain pull further into the lead while Mike Huckabee gained considerable ground.

Romney made the announcement in Washington at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington, and said that he was dropping out so that he could help to unify the Republican party.

"Because I love America, in this time of war, I feel I have to stand aside for our party and our country," Romney said.

During his speech, Romney stated that he agreed with McCain's opinion that the United States needed to continue the war in Iraq until victory is achieved, but did not officially endorse any candidates.

Romney said that he wanted to continue his campaign until the Republican Convention in September, but said, "I'd forestall the launch of a national campaign and frankly, I'd make it easier for Senator Clinton or Obama to win."

Romney allegedly was running out of campaign funds and was signing personal checks to further his campaign in the last few weeks of his candidacy.

Of the three candidates, it was estimated that Huckabee would be the one forced to drop out after Super Tuesday, so Romney's withdrawal came as a surprise to many.

Romney won seven of the 21 states that held GOP primaries on Super Tuesday.

• **John McCain** was the big winner for the Republicans on Super Tuesday, capturing victories in nine states. He won Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arizona and California. These delegate-rich state victories put McCain into place as the front runner for the GOP nomination, and with only Mike Huckabee left to challenge him, it may not be long before McCain wraps up his position as the Republican nominee.

McCain currently has 689 delegate votes while Huckabee has only 156.

• **Barack Obama** won the most states for the Democratic party on Super Tuesday with 13. He gained victories in Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Alabama, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, Colorado, Utah, Idaho and Alaska. Despite his victories, he has not pulled completely away from Hillary Clinton, and the race could go on until the Democratic Convention in August.

• **Hillary Clinton** won nine states on Super Tuesday (Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Arizona, California and American Samoa). Her victory in California was especially significant since it has the largest amount of Democratic delegates of any state. She currently has more delegate votes than Obama with 892. Obama has 716.

• Democratic Chairman **Howard Dean** would like to avoid the extension of the fight for the nomination to the Democratic convention. He said that, "I think we will have a nominee sometime in the middle of March or April, but if we don't, then we're going to have to get the candidates together and make some kind of an arrangement.

"I don't think we can afford to have a brokered convention," he said.

"That would not be good news for either party."

• Republican candidate **Mike Huckabee** won five states on Super Tuesday (Georgia, West Virginia, Alabama, Tennessee and Arkansas. Huckabee's status as a pastor has helped him gain significant ground in the southern "Bible Belt," where he has won many states. As of now, Huckabee does not stand much of a chance at catching John McCain, but plans to stay in the race for as long as his campaign funds will allow.

• Pennsylvania Governor **Ed Rendell** announced his endorsement of Hillary Clinton last week.



Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton could become running mates in the 2008 election.

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With Mitt Romney ending his campaign and Mike Huckabee more than likely soon to follow, it's become nearly a fool-proof truth that John McCain will be the presidential nominee for the Republican party. He will square off with either Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama, who have been alone in the Democratic race for over a week.

Democratic chairman, Howard Dean, expressed hopes that Clinton and Obama will have ended their fight for the nomination before the Democratic convention in August, and if that happens their will be only one nominee from each party left with a realistic shot at winning the presidency at least three months before the elections take place.

This brings into play the question of who the running mates of these finalists will be. The decision of the nominees could very easily have a drastic effect on the amount of votes they receive in November.

On the conservative side of the spectrum, it's safe now to assume that McCain will be deciding on a potential vice president to run with him after he becomes the lone nominee. One of his senior advisers told CNN that he had called Mitt Romney soon after he announced that he was ending his campaign, and that during the conversation he said that he looked forward to sitting down with him.

The advisor also said that McCain planned on speaking soon with Huckabee.

McCain will most likely select one of them to be his running mate, but who?

It's no secret that many Republicans dislike McCain, so his choice of a vice president could make or break the way that many voters decide to go in when they cast their ballots.

Romney, though he has not officially endorsed McCain, said that he agreed with his opinion to stick it out in Iraq, and not to leave. He also stated that his main reason for leaving the campaign was to "unite the party," and said that if he stayed in the battle until the convention he would be doing the

Republicans a disservice.

"I'd forestall the launch of a national campaign and frankly, I'd make it easier for Senator Clinton or Obama to win," Romney said.

Some of Romney's beliefs make him an unstable choice, though. He's been criticized for his tendency to flip-flop on topics such as abortion.

Huckabee, on the other hand, could help McCain gain some of the Evangelical support that he's lacked so far in his campaign if he makes the cut for running mate. The former pastor has become a favorite in many of the southern Bible Belt states, where he's captured the majority of his primary victories.

He could bring a religious morality to McCain's decidedly hawkish campaign, which would appeal to many conservative voters.

In the liberal camp, it's much more difficult to decipher who will become the finalist's running mate. It's been widely speculated that their could be a ticket that involves both Obama and Clinton, which is a possibility that some political analysts love and some refuse to embrace.

The fact that the two are so closely split in voting right now presents both pros and cons. If they team up, then it could successfully unite the Democratic party, but it could also steer away voters that usually support the candidate that ends up in the vice president slot, since the two candidates disagree strongly on a few principles.

Either candidate could bring John Edwards back into the campaign as a running mate, which could sway a few of his supporters in their direction without doing much harm, since he was not strongly disliked or criticized during his campaign.

If Obama wins the nomination, he could conceivably choose Ted Kennedy (who avidly endorsed him along with the rest of the Kennedy family) as a running mate, which could prove to be very effective since Kennedy holds so much weight among Democrats.

Their could be any number of other surprise selections for either side, too, and as this wildly unpredictable election draws closer, it may not become any easier to predict than it has been so far.

The Beacon wants to know who you think should be the next president. E-mail the name of your favorite candidate to srm5082@psu.edu, and the results will run in next week's issue.

Top 5 Fictional Presidents By Scott Muska

5. Robin Williams in *Man of the Year*
4. Al Gore in *South Park*
3. Harrison Ford in *Air Force One*
2. Martin Sheen in *West Wing*
1. Bill Pullman in *Independence Day*